# SALTON SEA TEST BASE FACT SHEET

SOUTHWEST DIVISION NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND
DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY

## INTRODUCTION

In an effort to provide frequent, brief, and understandable updates on the environmental cleanup at the Salton Sea Test Base (SSTB), the U.S. Navy is now publishing monthly fact sheets on current activities at the base. This is the second in this new series and provides an overview of the most comprehensive report on groundwater produced since cleanup began in 1992. This report is called the Preliminary Draft 1995 Annual Groundwater Monitoring Report. It has recently been released for public and regulatory review and is available at the information repositories listed on the back of this fact sheet.

## Groundwater Monitoring at Salton Sea Test Base

The U.S. Navy's investigative team studying environmental concerns at the SSTB is continuing its efforts to evaluate the groundwater that underlies the base. A key factor in its work is the Comprehensive Groundwater Monitoring Work Plan, a document that outlines procedures for measuring water levels and sampling the 57 groundwater monitoring wells located throughout the base. Among its several provisions, the Work Plan calls for preparation of an annual monitoring report on the quality of groundwater in an effort to evaluate any long-term affects it could ultimately have on human health and the environment. ■

## What is Groundwater?

Groundwater occurs beneath the surface of the land and within the pores and open spaces of soil and rock. It originates from rain and surface water (streams, rivers, lakes, etc.) that seep into the ground.

Over the years, an area's supply of groundwater changes with long-term weather cycles, and is also affected by the amount that is pumped out of nearby wells. In times of drought, some wells may even go dry as the general water supply recedes more deeply into the ground.

Groundwater flows both horizontally and vertically in the subsurface, with movement being largely determined by the type of soil and rock present. It typically moves very slowly in comparison to surface water in streams and rivers. Groundwater movement tends to be slower through clay and silt and faster through sand and gravel due to the more porous nature of these materials.

## 1995 Annual Groundwater Report

Attracting most of the current attention is the Preliminary Draft 1995 Annual Groundwater Monitoring Report, a document that contains encouraging results from data collected during four quarterly rounds of groundwater monitoring conducted since April 1994. The findings indicate that metals concentration levels at most of the base's Installation Restoration Program sites are similar to those naturally occurring in the area, thus making it unlikely that metals related to past military operations have affected or are likely to affect groundwater quality at SSTB. The results also show that, witha few exceptions, the presence of organic compounds in the groundwater are below acceptable regulatory levels.

"Petroleum leaks at previous underground storage tank locations will continue to be a primary target during our groundwater investigations," said Mike Radecki, the Navy's Remedial Project Manager for SSTB. "We will be gathering additional data during the coming year that will help assess whether any groundwater at the base presents a potential risk to human health or the environment. But, the information collected so far looks encouraging."

Information from the 1995 Annual Report is being used to evaluate whether a specific site should be recommended for "no further action," or whether it should continue to be monitored. The 1995 Annual Groundwater Monitoring Report for SSTB recommends that groundwater monitoring be discontinued at wells located at eight sites. At the same time, continued monitoring is advised for Site 1, the Taxiway Landfill; Site 10LA, the old Land Aeroballistic Target; Site 25, the Main Compound Leach Field; and for all wells at former underground storage tank locations. The report also proposes closing two existing wells that were installed prior to the current clean up activities.

It should be noted that the naturally occurring groundwater near the base is of poor quality, and that groundwater in the Imperial Valley is not used for public consumption.

Additional monitoring of groundwater at SSTB is slated to continue through September 1997. Annual reports providing analysis of groundwater data collected quarterly will be released each year.

## SSTB Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) Update

The SSTB Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) will once again take a break for the summer. Several activities are tentatively scheduled during this time, however, and will be announced in future monthly fact sheets. The first RAB meeting after summer will be held in September.

**Information Repositories** for the SSTB cleanup project have been established at two locations in the area so that the local community has the opportunity to review project documents and reports:

**Salton City Library**
2098 Frontage Road (Hwy 86)
Salton City, CA (619) 394-4446

Hours: Mon-Wed-Fri
8:00 AM - NOON
1:00 PM - 2:00 PM

**Spencer Library Media Center**
Imperial Valley College, Alten Road/Hwy 111
Imperial, CA (619) 355-6377

Hours: Mon-Thur: 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM
Fri: 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Sat: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM
(exept holidays)

*In addition, documents, reports, and Restoration Advisory Board meeting minutes and agendas are available at the reading room of the Salton City spa and RV Park in Salton City. Please contact Ms. Shirley Lee Palmer at (619) 394-4333 for hours.*

## MAILING LIST

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